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✓ *could* 23 MAR 1961

The Honorable Christian A. Herter
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Chris:

We have given very careful study to Fred Eaton's suggestion about alerting, on an informal basis, certain members of the Soviet Disarmament Delegation that we know more about their military achievements than they realize. [REDACTED]

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On balance we are not in favor of the proposed course of action for the following reasons:

1. We believe that it would be desirable for the U. S. at the Summit or elsewhere, to make a major drive against the whole Soviet policy of secrecy and "cover-up" with respect to the offensive arm of their military preparations. The countries of the Free World are open and above board about their military preparations. Hence we cannot be accused of arming in secret or preparing for surprise attack and the like. The Soviet can be charged with doing just that, and in so doing add a tragic note of uncertainty to the whole international situation. I believe this could be developed as a major theme and made quite understandable. Of course the Soviet could retort that we and the other free nations cannot help this. And why should they give up a valuable asset. This may be a practical answer but at least it would put them on the defensive and their answer would not be persuasive in world opinion. We cannot well follow the above course of action and at the same time boast of our knowledge of their military posture.

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2. If we start to create the impression that we know a great deal more than we profess about their military preparations they can retort -- as they have done in connection with the detection of nuclear explosions -- that we do not need the measures of control that we are seeking as we have the knowledge anyway.

3. Any disclosures which went beyond surfacing our knowledge with respect to long range missile flights, nuclear explosions, etc., -- and here they already know our capabilities quite well -- would risk alerting the

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4. Over the coming months we will vitally need to carry on a program in the Aquatone field directed in particular against our highest priority target; namely Soviet techniques in the deployment and the establishment of bases of their ICBMs. We certainly do not wish to alert them to any information obtained by Aquatone means even though we try to disguise such information as having been obtained by ordinary methods of intelligence. Such disguise would probably not be very persuasive to them and would tend to put them on their guard.

5. Given the Soviet mentality, I feel the vouchsafing of information about the extent of our intelligence successes -- far from persuading them to give up their security methods -- would tend to make them do everything possible to tighten them. The only way to bring them to any change in this field is to make it clear that it is the only way they can expect to get any progress in the field of armament limitations to which they seem to be giving high priority.

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If, as a matter of high policy, you differ with these conclusions and feel that it is essential to progress at Geneva to provide some nuggets of information showing our own capabilities and their lack of complete security, we will do our best to provide them. However, we trust that consideration will be given to the above factors which we consider to be quite basic and lead us to conclude that we should not start down what we feel to be a dangerous path.

Faithfully yours,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

AWD:mfb 28Mar60

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